

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer based method for assessing the performance of an energy utility, the method comprising:
 - a. designating a target utility from amongst a plurality of energy utilities and retrieving performance data for the target utility from a database;
 - b. specifying a benchmark criteria defining a subset of the plurality of utilities and causing performance data for the subset to be retrieved, the subset not including the target utility;
 - c. causing a comparison between the performance data for the target and the performance data for the subset to be generated; and
 - d. assessing the performance of the target in relation to the subset using the generated comparison.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the benchmark criteria comprise at least a requirement that each member of the subset have data for at least one associated performance indicator within a specified range.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the performance data for the target includes performance ratio data corresponding to the target and the performance data for the subset includes performance ratio data corresponding to members of the subset.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein the performance ratio data corresponding to the target includes data representing maintenance cost per distribution line mile.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of causing the comparison to be generated comprises causing a regression analysis to be performed on at least one affecting driver and at least one performance indicator for the subset, the determination of

an expected value for the at least one performance indicator based on the regression analysis and a comparison between the performance data for the target and the expected value to be generated.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of causing the comparison to be generated comprises causing a Data Envelopment Analysis to be performed on a plurality DEA inputs and a plurality of DEA outputs for the subset, the determination of expected values for each of the plurality of DEA outputs and a comparison between the performance data for the target and the expected values to be generated.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the step of causing the comparison to be generated further comprises varying at least one of the plurality of DEA inputs, causing a Data Envelopment Analysis to be performed using the at least one varied DEA input, causing the determination of expected values for each of a varied set of DEA outputs, and comparing the expected values for the varied set of DEA outputs to the expected values for the plurality of DEA outputs.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assessing the performance of the target comprises causing a composite score for the target to be generated from the performance data for the target.

9. A computer based method for assessing the performance of an energy utility, the method comprising:

- a. building a database, the database having performance data for a plurality of energy utilities;
- b. designating a target utility from amongst the plurality of energy utilities and causing performance data for the target to be retrieved from the database;

- c. specifying a benchmark criteria defining a subset of the plurality of utilities and causing performance data for the subset to be retrieved from the database, the subset not including the target utility;
- d. causing a comparison between the performance data for the target and the performance data for the subset to be generated; and
- e. assessing the performance of the target in relation to the subset using the generated comparison.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein the benchmark criteria comprise at least a requirement that each member of the subset have data for at least one associated performance indicator within a specified range.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein the performance data for the target includes performance ratio data corresponding to the target and the performance data for the subset includes performance ratio data corresponding to members of the subset.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the performance ratio data corresponding to the target includes a data representing distributed maintenance cost per electrical line mile.

13. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of causing the comparison to be generated comprises causing a regression analysis to be performed on at least one affecting driver and at least one performance indicator for the subset, said regression analysis determining an expected value for the at least one performance indicator and causing a comparison of the performance data for the target and the expected value to be generated.

14. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of causing the comparison to be generated comprises causing a Data Envelopment Analysis to be performed on a plurality DEA inputs and a plurality of DEA outputs for the subset, said Data Envelopment Analysis determining expected values for each of the plurality of DEA outputs and causing a comparison between the performance data for the target and the expected values to be generated.

15. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of generating the comparison further comprises varying at least one of the plurality of DEA inputs, performing a Data Envelopment Analysis using the at least one varied DEA input, determining expected values for each of a varied set of DEA outputs, and comparing the expected values for the varied set of DEA outputs to expected values for the plurality of DEA outputs.

16. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of assessing the performance of the target comprises causing a composite score for the target to be generated from the performance data for the target.

17. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of assessing the performance of the target comprises generating a cross checking analysis for a consistence of information obtained from alternate assessment methods.

18. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of assessing the performance of the target comprises generating a multi-attribute utility profiling to facilitate the review and analysis of an overall performance and potential improvement of the target utility.